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Good Morning Chairman McCaul, Congressman Cuellar and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security. My name is Steven McCraw, I am the Director of the Texas Department of Public Safety and I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on this vitally important economic, public safety and national security issue.

The most significant vulnerability to the State of Texas remains an unsecure Texas/Mexico Border. The Mexican Cartels continue to exploit weaknesses in our border defenses including those at the 28 international bridges that connect Texas with Mexico to reap the enormous profits generated by the smuggling of ton quantities of marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine and heroin into and throughout the United States to virtually every drug market in the nation while smuggling tens of billions of dollars, weapons and stolen vehicles back into Mexico. They also profit from kidnappings, extortions, major theft, and the smuggling and trafficking of people. The amount and type of violence committed by the Mexican Cartels is unparalleled in organized crime. They have embraced barbaric terrorist tactics to intimidate and coerce their rivals, law enforcement, elected officials, journalists, military personnel and the citizens of Mexico. And they continue to corrupt individuals and institutions to protect their criminal enterprise activities and themselves on both sides of the border.

The Mexican Cartels will continue to undermine the domestic security of Mexico and the safety and security of Texas and the nation until the U.S. border with Mexico is secured at the International Ports of Entry (POEs), between the POEs and along our coast. They are highly adaptable and as security is increased in one area, they quickly exploit vulnerabilities in other areas, thus a comprehensive and fully integrated approach is essential.

The Mexican Cartels have long exploited the lines and limited CBP resources and technology at our POEs to move ton quantities of drugs into the U.S. and bulk cash, weapons and stolen vehicles into Mexico. Large loads of drugs routinely cross the international bridges in trucks, buses, passenger vehicles and rail using a variety of concealment techniques. CBP interdicts thousands of large drug shipments attempting to cross the international bridges but they do not have near enough personnel and technology

to prevent the Mexican Cartels from continuing to exploit this serious vulnerability as evidenced in the seizures that occur beyond the POEs:

- On March 29, 2012, U.S. Border Patrol agents at a checkpoint located on U.S. 67 four miles south of Marfa seized 2,395.65 pounds of marijuana concealed in voids inside construction equipment located on a flatbed trailer after it crossed into Texas undetected at the Presidio Port of Entry.
- On March 29, 2012, the Parker County Sheriff's Office seized approximately 2,500 pounds of marijuana concealed inside construction equipment that was being transported on a tractor-trailer at a truck stop on I-20.
- On January 12, 2012, a Texas State Trooper stopped a tractor-trailer traveling on U.S. 77 in Refugio County, resulting in the seizure of 341 pounds of marijuana concealed in the trailer with a cover load of limes that originated in Veracruz, Mexico.
- A Colorado High Intensity Drug Task Force investigation documented the use of buses to smuggle more than 45,000 pounds of marijuana over 11 months that crossed at POEs in El Paso.
- Within a 10 day span of time, a State Trooper patrolling US 59 in Wharton County seized 3,479 pounds of marijuana concealed in a truck load of watermelons and another 4,235 pounds of marijuana concealed in a truck load of oranges.
- On May 29, 2011 a Texas State Trooper seized 12,650 lbs of marijuana from a truck which had entered through the Pharr POE.
- The Mexican Cartels also use the POEs to smuggle other drugs as evidenced in the many CBP seizures at the POEs and Border Patrol Check points and by local and state law enforcement officers patrolling the highways.
- For example, a Texas State Trooper in Northern Texas seized 60 pounds of heroin that crossed a POE here in Laredo, Texas.

Some of the highlights from last week include:

- DPS Agents seizing 145 lbs of cocaine concealed in the roof of a commercial trailer traveling on US-281 near Edinburg, TX.
- A State Trooper seizing 3,277.4 lbs of marijuana concealed in two large metal containers covered by wooden pallets in a trailer pulled by a truck on US-281 near San Manuel, TX.
- CBP Officers at the Gateway to the Americas Bridge seizing 15.2 pounds of methamphetamine hidden within plastic containers comingled with mole.
- A CBP K-9 Officer near the Hidalgo POE seized 231.57 lbs of marijuana in four elongated bundles at a drainage area.
- Matagorda County Sheriff's Office Deputies and Palacios Police Department Officers seizing \$1,200,000 in Cartel cash from a residence.

Mexico is a highly valued trade partner and legitimate commerce should not be held hostage by the Mexican Cartels. Sufficient personnel and effective technologies are needed to deny the ability of the Cartels to exploit these high value smuggling routes while enabling the rapid and secure movement of people and merchandise through the POEs.

The State of Texas clearly understands that securing our nation's border with Mexico is the sovereign responsibility of the federal government and we commend the brave men and women of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Service for the tremendous work they do on a daily basis to protect our nation's borders from all threats with the resources they have been provided. The foremost priority of local and state law enforcement in Texas has been and will continue to be the protection of its citizens from all forms of Mexican Cartel and gang related violence and our second priority is to assist our federal partners in securing the Texas/Mexico border which is interrelated with our first priority.

The federal government can secure our borders if sufficient personnel, technology, aircraft and maritime assets are dedicated to this mission. . Until then, the state of Texas will continue to support CBP with local and state law enforcement personnel, unified ground, air and maritime patrol operations, centralized intelligence, decentralized information sharing and additional aviation, maritime and tactical assets. The state will also dedicate investigative and prosecutorial resources and continue to execute the Cross Border Violence Contingency Plans as needed because the CBP mission is too important to the state of Texas and the nation.

The consequences of an unsecure border with Mexico are serious:

1. Nation-wide availability and affordability of marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine and heroin.
  - According to the Department of Justice' 2011 National Drug Threat Assessment the abuse of several major illicit drugs, including heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine, appeared to be increasing, especially among the young. And the estimated economic cost of illicit drug use to society for 2007 was more than **\$193** billion which reflected direct and indirect public costs related to crime (\$61.4billion), health (\$11.4 billion), and lost productivity (\$120.3 billion).
  - The DOJ Assessment states that Mexican-based Trans National Criminal Organizations (TCOs) dominate the supply, trafficking, and wholesale distribution of most illicit drugs in the United States and the reasons for the Mexican organizations' dominance include their control of smuggling routes across the U.S. Southwest Border and their capacity to produce, transport, and/or distribute cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine.

- The collective local, state and federal law enforcement drug seizures within the Texas border region increased by 57% from 2008 to 2011 which supports the findings made in the 2011 DOJ National Drug Threat Assessment.

	<b>Operation Border Star</b>		
	<b>2008 (Pounds)</b>	<b>2011 (Pounds)</b>	<b>% Change 2008 v 2011</b>
Marijuana	1,051,246	1,658,017	+57.65%
Meth	553	2,058	+272.15%
Cocaine	10,849	11,402	+5.1%
Heroin	66	495	+650%
<b>TOTAL DRUGS</b>	<b>1,062,714</b>	<b>1,671,972</b>	<b>+57.33%</b>

2. The Empowerment of the Mexican Cartels who threaten the domestic security of Mexico.
  - The Mexican Cartels are motivated by the billions of dollars in profit from drug and human smuggling with estimates ranging as high as \$39 billion a year. The Cartels use these enormous profits to battle each other and the Government of Mexico.
  - It is estimated that over 48,000 people in Mexico have lost their lives since 2006 as the Cartels fought to gain and or maintain control of the highly lucrative smuggling routes into the U.S. As long as the border remains unsecure, the Mexican Cartels will continue their campaign of violence and corruption along its Northern border and Texas must remain vigilant as it shares 64% of the border with Mexico.
3. It provides Texas prison gangs resources to expand their criminal operations on both sides of the border.
  - According to the Department of Justice gang suppression, prevention, and corrections programs cost the nation more than \$5.5 billion each year and that the toll exacted by gang activity in lives lost and damage to the social fabric of communities is certainly higher.
  - The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) spends more than \$1 billion a year to suppress Gang related criminal activity and at least \$275 million a year on gang prevention programs, according to 2009 DOJ information.
  - An estimated \$4.2 billion a year is spent on new and repeat incarcerations of gang members in federal and state correctional facilities and the Bureau of Justice Statistics has reported that gang members were responsible for approximately 4,323 homicides between 2005 and 2009.
  - The number of Texas Prison Gangs working directly with the Mexican Cartels has increased from four to thirteen within 2 years.
  - The percentage Texas Prison Gang members incarcerated at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice system for violent offenses is 62%.

4. It increases the risk of our school children along the Texas/Mexico border of being corrupted by the Cartels.
  - The Texas border region comprises 9.7% of the state's population but has 19.2% of the juvenile felony drug referrals and 21.8% of the juvenile felony gang referrals.
  - Children as young as 12 years old have been paid to transport drugs in stolen vehicles and 25 students in one high school in a Texas border county were transporting drugs for the Cartels.
5. It enables the Cartels to conduct drug and human smuggling operations on Texas ranches, farms and cities throughout the state increasing the risk to the public and law enforcement.
  - There have been over 2,065 high speed pursuits in the border region some involving cartel blocking cars, 77 instances of Caltraps deployed to disable patrol cars and 62 pursuits ending with the drug loads being driven into the Rio Grande River and met by Cartel boat retrieval teams.
  - 73 local, state and federal law enforcement officers have been shot at from Mexico in 53 separate incidents while attempting to interdict drug loads on the Rio Grande River and there have been 26 documented Cartel-related murders and 22 kidnappings.
6. It increases the trafficking of people in the U.S.
  - The number of Border Patrol Illegal Alien arrests in Texas decreased from 175,595 in 2008 to 125,821 in 2011. However, others who were not arrested fell victim to human traffickers and were kidnapped, extorted, compelled into prostitution and forced into indentured servitude. These crimes are seldom reported and when they are they are not reflected in UCR Index Crimes.
  - A recent example illustrates the seriousness of the problem. On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012 a Texas State Trooper assigned to the Tactical Marine Unit was flagged down by two pedestrians in distress who identified a residence where they were held against their will. Thirty eight illegal aliens were rescued from the residence after being held captive for three days without food. The females being held captive had been sexually assaulted.
7. It provides potential terrorists and their supporters a way in to the U.S. without detection.

- The Rio Grande Valley leads the nation in the number of Illegal Aliens arrested along the border between the ports of entry from countries that have a documented terrorism presence such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Somalia.
8. It enables serial criminals from around the world to come to the U.S and commit crimes.
    - Through the Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Secure Communities Initiative, Texas has identified a total of 101,133 unique criminal alien defendants booked into Texas jails who are responsible for at least 343,226 individual criminal charges over their criminal careers including 1,738 homicides, 645 kidnappings and 42,402 assaults.
  9. The Mexican Cartels corrupt local, state and federal U.S. law enforcement officials in support of their smuggling operations.
    - Since 2004, 132 federal law enforcement officers have been arrested for corruption along the southwest border and according to the DHS Inspector General as of May, 2011 there were 1,036 open investigations of CBP personnel. Border corruption plagues local and state law enforcement as well. Two Texas Sheriffs were convicted for Cartel-related corruption and recently a Texas State Trooper seized over \$1 million being transported by a former DPS Officer who was seeking election to a Constable position in South Texas.
  10. It exposes Unaccompanied Alien Children (UACs) from Central America and Mexico seeking refuge in the U.S. to serious risk from human traffickers and criminals.
    - Although Illegal Alien arrests in Texas have decreased since 2008, the number of UACs increased dramatically. According to media reports HHS advised that the number of UACs have increased by 93% since last year.
    - The federal government lacks the capacity to address the dramatic increases in UACs and as word continues to spread more UACs will likely come further stressing the system unless foreign governments can be enlisted to intervene.
    - The management of a simple childhood disease, like the chicken pox, has illustrated the challenges in addressing the UAC issue. Approximately, 10% of the UACs that arrive at emergency shelters in Texas have contracted or been exposed to a communicable disease requiring an immediate response from the Texas Department of State Health Services and local healthcare systems.
    - Understandably, the need to coordinate among five separate federal agencies; DHS/CBP, DHS/ICE, HHS/ASPR, HHS/AFC, and DOD on this issue is challenging.
    - The unfortunate paradox that exists is that by adhering to our values to treat these children exceptionally well, we will likely entice greater numbers of children to endanger themselves.

Lastly, I would like to thank Chairman McCaul, Congressman Cuellar and other distinguished members of this subcommittee for your unwavering commitment to securing our nation's borders in a way that ensures the secure and efficient commerce with Mexico.